

The DeMint amendment, however, strips away those rights and protections. Proponents have raised specious arguments about the consequences of providing worker protections to people whose job it is to protect us. In fact, the opposite is true.

The McCaskill amendment helps ensure that a screening system intended to prevent acts of terrorism actually prevents acts of terrorism. If we want TSOs to protect our health and safety, we should protect theirs. For the sake of screeners and travelers both, TSOs should not be overworked.

For the sake of screeners and travelers both, TSOs should not fear retaliation if they report security breaches.

For the sake of screeners and travelers both, TSOs should have somewhere to turn if they are being harassed or bullied at the workplace or if there are health and safety issues in the workplace.

Basic rights, basic common sense. That is what the McCaskill amendment is about. It doesn't give TSOs the right to strike. It does not compromise the public safety. Actually, it promotes the public safety.

I urge every Member of this body to allow TSOs the same basic rights and privileges and protections as other Federal employees. Vote yes on the McCaskill amendment because you care about these workers, and vote yes because you care about all of us, the people they are protecting.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from North Carolina is recognized.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I take the floor today to speak on two subjects and very briefly to address my colleague from Ohio. Mr. President, I wish to make an important point about why these collective bargaining provisions are, in fact, harmful to the United States of America and to the American people. It is a pretty simple point.

Terrorists don't have collective bargaining agreements. I will say that again. Terrorists don't have collective bargaining agreements. Terrorists don't go on strike. Terrorists don't call their unions to negotiate before they attack. They are always plotting and, because of this, we must be always working vigilantly to protect our homeland.

Today we are debating how quickly we are going to respond to threats from terrorists who are eager to strike us, and some in this body are suggesting that we should give the ability of the people who are on the front lines to collectively bargain. It is absurd. It is absolutely absurd. But I assure my colleagues, if this collective bargaining language stays in, we risk doing exactly that—accepting something absurd.

(The remarks of Mr. BURR pertaining to the introduction of S. 765 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements

on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Florida.

RISK-BASED FUNDING

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, I wish to speak this morning in favor of Feinstein-Cornyn amendment No. 335 and highlight how important it is that our homeland security grants be awarded on the basis of risk.

As we have debated and discussed on the floor of this Chamber on numerous occasions, the smartest and most pragmatic approach to funding for homeland security grants is based on the level of risk faced by communities, not by some arbitrary formula.

It is a simple approach. Places that face more risk and are more attractive targets to terrorist attacks should receive more funding. This was the approach articulated and supported by the 9/11 Commission, and it is one that this body should have approved.

As we all know, the way homeland security funds are distributed now reflects a political compromise. It does not reflect a realistic assessment of our Nation's security needs. Some money will be based on risk, but all States are guaranteed of receiving some funding.

It makes very good sense to create a structure whereby first responder funds are allocated based on risk of a terrorist attack. In my home State of Florida, we have ports, tourism, and population centers. We have major cities, such as Miami, Tampa, and Jacksonville, all with stadiums, professional sports franchises, and busy downtowns.

As a former mayor of Orange County, I recognize the critical need for risk-based funding of homeland security grants.

If you look at the population of Orlando, it appears to be a moderately sized city. However, if one considers the interests of the greater Orlando area with tourist attractions, amusement parks, and resorts, at any one time, there can be millions of Americans and foreign visitors in the Orlando area.

According to the Orlando County Visitors Bureau, roughly 45 million visitors come to central Florida each year—45 million visitors. There is no way our current funding system accounts for this reality. Across Florida, we have significant roadways, railroads, and some of the busiest ports in the world. We are told all are potential targets, but our current method of funding does not reflect the needs of my State or that of many other States. We need to correct this problem. The American people expect us to correct this problem. That is why I am supporting the Feinstein-Cornyn amendment.

Following the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission, this amendment

would, first of all, ensure that homeland security grants are allocated on a risk-based formula built on assessment of threat, vulnerability, and consequence to the maximum extent practicable. Secondly, it would assure a guaranteed minimum funding for homeland security grants, without turning the program into another grant system for redistributing Federal funds arbitrarily. The amendment also directs the DHS Secretary to consider transient and tourist populations as risk targets for deciding the disbursement of funding for homeland security grants. Finally, it sets minimum performance requirements for homeland security grants and a 2-year audit cycle for grant recipients by the DHS inspector general.

Under this amendment, every State would continue to receive some funding; it is just that now the cities and States most at risk would receive most of the funding. This amendment certainly makes sense to Florida's new Governor, Charlie Crist, who believes it to be the best option for Florida. I feel the same way. I know other Senate colleagues of mine believe Senators FEINSTEIN and CORNYN have put together a commonsense amendment that helps the cities and States most at risk. I will vote in favor of this amendment, and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

Our Secretary of Homeland Security, Michael Chertoff, also thinks it a prudent move and said as much during a debate on the homeland security grants during 2005. Secretary Chertoff remarked then:

Funding our first responders based on risk and need gives us the flexibility to ensure our finite resources are allocated in a prioritized and objective manner.

What this means is communities across this Nation—whether they are large or small; whether or not they would appear to be high-risk terrorist targets—are receiving precious resources that are going to local law enforcement agencies so they can upgrade their equipment and other resources. We should not be allocating, in some formulaic method, the limited money set aside for first responders. We need to take a more direct approach.

There is a reason terrorists struck New York and Washington on September 11: They wanted to strike two of our most powerful cities. They wanted to cripple our Government and sabotage our economy. It is for these reasons that cities such as New York and Washington should receive homeland security grants that are commensurate with that risk. A spending formula does not speak to this basic reality.

I support the Feinstein-Cornyn amendment and ask my colleagues to support this amendment as well.

As we continue this important debate, the heart of our efforts should be on making America safer, not rewarding particular communities or interest groups. It is disheartening to me that